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Latin American women especially those with an indigenous history might have a particular gene in them that protects them from breast cancer. Earlier epidemiological studies say that Latinas might be less prone to developing breast cancer than women from other ethnicities. Even though, the exact reasons for this result were unknown. However, currently an international team of USCF scientists have found the exact spot on the DNA which is responsible for this extra protection.

Scientists still have much work to do to find out what that particular gene variant means and how it interacts with the rest of the body to prevent breast cancer. It is good news in a general sense, but this does not mean that Latin Americans stop using mammograms. Now, the scientists are trying to think of the best ways to incorporate this genetic information with the remaining risk factors of cancer to get a clearer picture of the breast cancer and its relation to the gene. The discovery also highlights the presence of a genetic risk factor between different ethnicities and racial sects. The advent of genome decoding helps scientists explore these differences. These variations would also explain how some ethnicities are at a higher or a lower risk of the disease, which could eventually lead to a better understanding of cancer overall.

White European women are at a 13 percent lifetime risk of breast cancer. African American women are at a risk of 11 percent while Asians and Pacific Island women suffer a risk of 10 percent. Latinas are at a 9.8 percent risk, however, the risk among Latinas with an indigenous American ancestry is 7 percent. Finding this out was not an easy task. The researchers culled through 3 billion genome spaces to identify the markers, which were highly associated to breast cancer risk. They finally landed on a variant that was situated on the sixth chromosome. This variant was found to have the highest impact on the breast cancer risk as compared to the 30 other variations that have been identified before. Hence, women who have at least one of these (which makes up around 20% of the total Latina population) are forty percent lesser likely to be infected with breast cancer. Whereas those with more than one copy of the variant on their DNA, have an even lesser risk.

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